

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Remarks at a Gala Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada in Ottawa, Canada**

*March 24, 2023*

*Prime Minister Trudeau. Miigwech, Claudette, for that beautiful prayer.*

Mr. President, Joe, thanks for coming to visit, neighbor. *[Laughter]*

Dr. Biden, Jill, thank you for being here as well. I know Sophie had a great time showing you around today.

And over the years at various summits and meetings, we've had a lot of meals and a lot of working conversations, but it's truly special to host you here at home in Canada.

*[At this point, Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French; no translation was provided. He then continued in English as follows.]*

Joe, one thing that everybody has learned about you is that you're a proud Irish American. You celebrate your roots, and that's so important to do. Whether one's a Bangladeshi American or Bolivian Canadian or any heritage, this diversity makes our countries and our communities stronger, better, and more resilient. And it's good to be loud about it too, because the diversity of our origins may not always be obvious on first glance.

For instance, the Canadian Americans or American Canadians in our midst tonight. You don't always know how someone will spell the word "color." *[Laughter]* Now, Joe and Jill, you may not know this, but there is a proud tradition amongst Canadians where we watch movies and television and nod knowingly to each other saying, "Americans don't know this, but we know they're Canadian." *[Laughter]*

Take a legendary comedy duo Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara. Here tonight. They've been in dozens of American movies playing American folksingers, American parents, American dog breeders.

Catherine, you've created absolutely iconic characters like—well, Kevin's mom and Moira Rose. And, Eugene, at this point, people just think of you as Canadian as American pie. *[Laughter]* I'm so glad my kids aren't here tonight so I don't have to explain that joke to them.

But, Catherine and Eugene, like so many of the people here tonight, wave the Canadian flag at home, in the U.S., and some from even further away.

I'm particularly pleased to be here at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum to be able to honor the accomplishments of Canadians in space. As Joe pointed out this afternoon: In the coming years, we'll certainly be marking the fact that a Canadian will be heading towards the Moon as part of the *Artemis II* mission, and I look forward to that display.

But I took a look around on the way in, and I hadn't yet seen any displays for one of Canada's most famous inhabitants of galaxies far, far away: Anakin Skywalker, also known as Hayden Christensen, who is with us here tonight.

And I could go on, but I think the habit of ours that we have as Canadians is really about pointing out how seamless the closeness between our two countries really is.

*[Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French; no translation was provided. He then continued in English as follows.]*

Both of our countries are built on a strong foundation of democracy, of opportunity, of a belief that hope and hard work will build a better future.

Our two countries share the longest peaceful border on Earth, as long as you don't talk about hockey. Although, as a Habs fan, I really appreciated your Toronto comments this afternoon.

Our border is almost 9,000 kilometers in length. Okay, a little less than 6,000 miles. Because, right, we don't share the metric system. But we do share so much else, from the northern reaches of Alaska and Yukon, which share beautiful landscapes and rich Indigenous cultures; to the Atlantic shores, where hard-working fishers in Atlantic Provinces and States source the kind of high-quality fish and seafood we're enjoying for our appetizer tonight.

Joe, the last time you visited, it was a snowy night in December of 2016. You saw that changes were coming. You warned us of countries turning increasingly inward. You warned that progress was at stake. You saw how crucial strong leadership among liberal democracies was to be.

And as your term as Vice President was coming to a close, you talked about how the world would start looking to Canada and to Canadians to stand strong in the face of disruption. Well, I want you to know that Canadians have been working really hard.

Let me tell you about the progress we've been making. We've forged ahead in the fight against climate change here at home and on the international stage. We've safeguarded reproductive rights in this country, providing funding for women's health around the world. And we just recently launched a \$10-a-day early learning and childcare plan that has already seen women's participation in the Canadian workforce rise.

We have walked the path of reconciliation. In July, the Pope came to Canada to apologize. Chief Wilton Littlechild—glad to see you here tonight, Willie—placed a feathered headdress on the pontiff in a profound gesture of forgiveness and reconciliation.

We've provided a safe haven for refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Syria and welcomed people from around the world.

We've tackled inequality. We've cut the poverty rate in Canada by more than half. And we've advocated internationally for the 2030 sustainable development goals that will help build a global future that is fair, equal, and peaceful.

*[Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French; no translation was provided. He then continued in English as follows.]*

Today, new threats to liberal democracy loom on the horizon, and we are united in our efforts to protect our countries and what we stand for. Canada and the U.S. are bolstering Ukraine's defense against Putin's illegal and unjustifiable invasion. We are steadfast security partners through NORAD and NATO and the Five Eyes alliances. We're standing shoulder to shoulder in defense of our values and against authoritarianism.

And we are working to fight climate change and create new opportunities for people in both of our countries.

We are facing the future head on, eyes open, and with an unwavering belief that justice will always rise up and make—as one of your favorite poets, Seamus Heaney, said—"hope and history rhyme."

Through our work together, let us secure peace, secure opportunity, and secure a healthy future for generations to come.

With that, I ask you all to raise your glasses as I offer a toast.

*[Prime Minister Trudeau spoke in French; no translation was provided. He then continued in English as follows.]*

To shared history and shared hope, to shared prosperity, and to the shared peace and security that binds Canada and the United States together as allies, as neighbors, and most importantly, as true friends.

*Sláinte. Santé.*

*[Prime Minister Trudeau offered a toast.]*

*President Biden.* Thank you very much. Y'all keep this up, I'm not going to want to go home. Thank you.

Good evening, everyone. Justin and Sophie, thank you for hosting us for this supper here in Ottawa.

And in my speech to Parliament earlier today, I quoted the famous Canadian poem "In Flanders Field[s]." More than a hundred years ago from the battlefields of France, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae wrote, and I quote, "To you from" the—"from failing hands we throw the torch, be yours to hold it high."

You know, from the poppy fields that we saw—and I was—it was incredible to be there, by the way, in Flanders Field and—when—on the anniversary—the 50th anniversary—that—to the landing grounds in Normandy, to today, when our nations still hold the torch very high for democracy, for equality, for freedom, and for our children.

Together, we've always found hope and light, creating a better future for all our people. We've always gotten to that point.

That's because we're more than neighbors. And I mean this from the bottom of my heart. We're more than neighbors. We're more than partners. We're more than friends. And you alluded to it today just a moment ago, Mr. Prime Minister, we're more like family. We're more like family.

I—we stand together as friends and as family. And for that reason, I'm optimistic about our future, because I really am optimistic about our future. And I'm very proud of our past.

And rather than take you through a much longer toast here, let me conclude by saying: You know, my Grandfather Finnegan used to have—in a toast, he'd joke about—an Irish toast. And he'd say: "May those who love us, love us. And those who don't, may God turn their ankle so we know they're limping when they're coming." *[Laughter]* Well, I kind of wish you that toast too. But at any rate—*[laughter]*.

But speaking of Seamus Heaney, Seamus's poem, "The Cure at Troy" was about hope and history rhyming. He said, history teaches us not to hope on this side of the grave. "But then, once in a lifetime, that longed-for tidal wave of justice rises up, and hope and history rhyme."

I believe with every fiber of my being we're at an inflection point where we can take control of that quote. I think we can make—if we have the strength and the courage and we stick together as family—we can make hope and history rhyme.

So, ladies and gentlemen, to all the family—all the family, U.S. and Canadian—and this is a hell of a thing to do to toast with water. *[Laughter]*

By the way, my grandfather used to say, if you toast with anything other than alcohol, you have to do it with your left hand. *[Laughter]* His name was Ambrose Finnegan. *[Laughter]*

So, ladies and gentlemen, to family, to Canada, and to the United States. Hear, hear.

*[President Biden offered a toast, and he and Prime Minister Trudeau clinked glasses.]*

*President Biden.* Thank you, man.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:30 p.m. at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, wife of Prime Minister Trudeau. Prime Minister Trudeau referred to Claudette Commanda, chancellor, University of Ottawa; actor Hayden Christensen; Pope Francis; former Member of Parliament J. Wilton Littlechild of Canada, who is a residential school survivor and indigenous rights activist; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to his children Xavier, Ella-Grace, and Hadrien Trudeau. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 25.

*Categories:* Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Canada, Prime Minister Trudeau.

*Locations:* Ottawa, Canada.

*Names:* Grégoire-Trudeau, Sophie; Trudeau, Justin P.J.

*Subjects:* Canada, President Biden's visit; Canada, Prime Minister; Canada, relations with U.S.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202300225.